

dans une terre jadis classique transformé aujourd'hui en un désert affreux, sont des titres que nous nous faire valoir et auxquels l'hommage d'une dédicace répond d'une manière très faible relativement au mérite personnel''.

That might have served as an epitaph, but in truth the collector cuts a much less heroic figure when seen at close range through the eyes of Rüppell, as recorded in memoranda and letters quoted by Mertens. HEY was a Rüdeshheim "surgeon" in his early twenties when he joined Rüppell's expedition, and he died only ten years later. His sole impact on natural history was during the five years spent working with or under Rüppell (who was four years older and lived to be ninety). Rüppell later regretted not having repatriated HEY after the first year, soon finding him unsatisfactory in his work and excessively addicted to alcohol. In these circumstances it was a cause of irritation to Rüppell that in Germany he and HEY were regarded as equals and friends. Rüppell was particularly offended by a picture (reproduced by Mertens) in which the two men were portrayed together, with HEY in a dominant pose. Rüppell waxed sarcastic about this, suggesting that his own likeness should be deleted from the canvas and replaced by a gigantic brandy-bottle; and that underneath should be inscribed the words "Ecce homo"!

None of this, however, constitutes a reason why the collector should suffer the posthumous indignity of having the correct spelling of his name relegated needlessly to the synonymy.

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## Toxic chemicals and wildlife

by STANLEY CRAMP

Toxic chemicals have led to considerable, if sometimes overstated, gains in agriculture, as well as improvements in public health, and many, including most of the herbicides, are not a serious danger to wildlife. Conservationists are not opposed to all chemicals, but mainly to two groups—the organophosphorous compounds and, above all, the organochlorines, which are highly persistent, passing from one animal in the food chain to another, often concentrating in the process, and, in sub-lethal quantities,

having serious effects on some bird populations by reducing fertility. In Britain mass deaths of birds led, in 1961, to the voluntary ban on certain organochlorines in seed-dressings, and, later, evidence of declines in numbers of birds of prey, together with the contamination of some foodstuffs, caused restrictions to be extended to most uses of the more toxic organochlorines. There is now clear evidence that most living things, including man, in Britain, are contaminated by persistent pesticides, although in many cases the residues are small and their significance still uncertain. Except for the U.S., Sweden and Holland, few other countries yet have facilities for measuring organochlorine residues, but similar contamination has been found wherever tests have been made, including the Pacific and Antarctic waters. Evidence of any decline in bird populations is limited so far to certain predatory species, partly, at least, because of the difficulties of census work and ignorance of population sizes before the new pesticides came into large-scale use. Amateur ornithologists in Britain have played a major part in gathering evidence of the effect of pesticides on wild populations. In pressing that the ultimate aim should be the elimination of the use of the persistent pesticides, conservationists are now supported by entomologists and others who doubt their long-term efficiency in controlling harmful insects and by those who fear their possible effects on human health. Meanwhile, it is essential to extend the restrictive measures in Britain to the less toxic persistent chemicals, such as BHC and DDT, to prescribe maximum permitted residues in foodstuffs and to give legal force to all control measures.

### Minutes of a Special General Meeting

A Special General Meeting was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, London, on Tuesday, 18th May, in order to ratify the realisation of the assets of the Barrington Trust Fund, to pay for essential repairs to the Club's house at Tring.

In the Notice calling the meeting, it was stated that as fifty members were required by the Club rules for this purpose, and attendance was usually less than that figure, proxies should be obtained from members in order to raise the necessary number of votes.

Shortly before the meeting, however, it was learnt that proxy votes would not be acceptable to the Trustees of the Trust Fund, and accordingly the voting was invalidated. It was pointed out that fifty members in person were required to vote in order to change the rules, but it was proposed by Sir Landsborough Thomson and seconded by Mr. C. J. O. Harrison that a meeting for this purpose should in due course be convened, and this motion was passed. It was also proposed by Sir Landsborough Thomson, and seconded by Mr. P. Tate, to take a vote on whether the meeting as constituted would be in favour of utilizing the Barrington Trust Fund and this motion was passed unanimously.

In view of the invalidation of the voting, no proposal could be made which would release Trust Funds sufficient to warrant authorizing the builders to commence repairs to the house at Tring.

Note: Miss C. M. Acland has very kindly offered the loan of the required sum.